

Gists and How to Use Them

A *gist* is short textual instance that describes a structural item. For example, two gists for "Obtaining" might be "Winning the Lottery" and "Losing Weight."

The purpose of *gists* is to provide English language approximations of the Dramatica structural item terms. Each one provides the 'gist' of the idea of the item. They work in several ways:

1. The most obvious use of gist is to use the gist database to make structural choices by choosing an appropriate gist for your story point. By doing so, it automatically chooses the associated structural item. This makes the process of picking storyforms easier. For example, two examples for Obtaining might be "Winning the Lottery" or "Losing Weight."
2. By using gists, the topic questions in the StoryGuide and other Query System topics reads more like a story-related question. For example, the topic question for Story Goal would originally read, "Describe how 'Obtaining' is the goal of common concern to everyone in the Overall Story throughline." With a gist selected, it would read, "Describe how 'Wining the Lottery' is the goal of common concern to everyone in the Overall Story throughline."
3. For those familiar with the Dramatica structural term definitions, they can create new gists specifically for the story in mind by typing it into the space allotted below the structural choice column. So long as it is appropriate for the structural item, it can be as broad or as narrow as the writer wants. Using the Story Goal of Obtaining in the above example, a user might create a gist such as, "Winning the California Super Lotto," or something completely new, such as, "Getting Rid of an Elected Politician." Both relate to 'Obtaining', so both are valid gists for that structural item.
4. For those unfamiliar (or less familiar) with Dramatica terminology, they may choose the available gists, or create a customized gist based on one of the existing list of gists. For example, the Obtaining gist 'Finding Something', could become, "Finding Someone to Adopt a Stray Cat," or "Finding a Lost Locket," or "Finding a Missing Person."

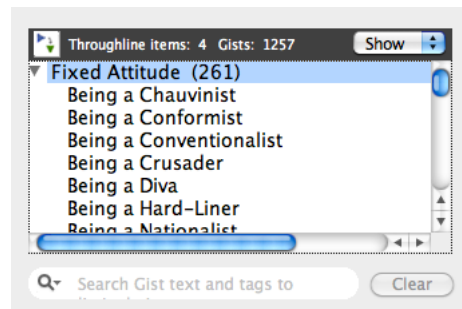
GIST USAGE TUTORIAL

Here's a quick "How to Use Gists" tutorial. Let's say you don't know how to work with gists.

- Open a new document in Dramatica Pro 5.
- Click on the StoryGuide icon in the icon bar at the top of the document window.



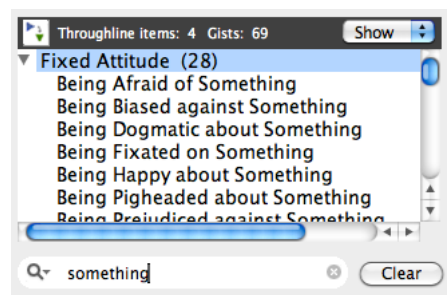
- Click on Quick Story.
- Click on the "OS Throughline" topic in the topics list on the left.
- Look at the structure finder. You should see the regular Dramatica terms plus a whole bunch of new items. These are the gists.



- Type "something" in the gist search field located underneath structure finder where it says, "Search Gist text and tags to..."

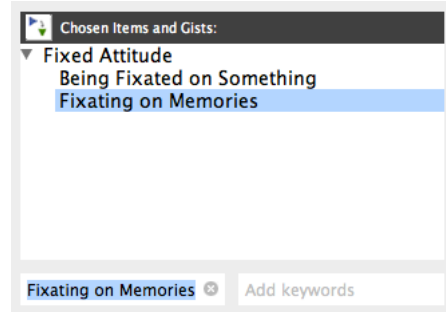


- Only gists with 'something' text show up in the structure list.



- Pick "Being Fixated on Something" by double-clicking on it.
- Notice that the topic question now says, "Describe how Being Fixated on Something relates to everybody's general troubles in the story:" The gists help make the topic questions more *story-like*.

- Now let's customize the gist to create our own gist. and the create a new gist by replace the wildcard with something from your story.
- Click in the "Create a Gist..." text box and write, "Fixating on Memories" and press RETURN.



- Click on "Being Fixated on Something" in the Chosen Items and Gists, then click on the << REMOVE button to remove it from the chosen items. This leaves your custom gist in the Chosen Items and Gists area.
- Notice that the topic question now says, "Describe how Fixating on Memories relates to everybody's general troubles in the story:"
- Voilà...you have learned how to turn a generic gist into one of your own, and learned how to create one of your own at the same time.

This should help with understanding what gists are and how to use them.